



VERTIGO

FABLES

58

Bill
WILLINGHAM
Michael
ALLRED

Apr 07
suggested for
mature readers
vertigo.comics.com

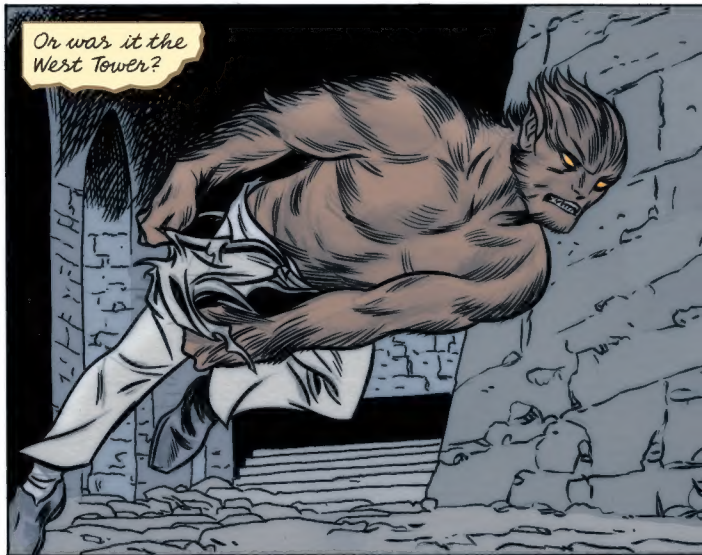
I guess it's the nature of memories to grow clouded with the passing of time.



For example, I can't recall which visit it was to Grandfather's castle when we found the ghost chained in the East Tower wardrobe.



Or was it the West Tower?




But one event I recall exactly in every detail, as if it had happened yesterday. It was on the first evening of our very first trip.



And I can't quite recall what year it was when we found the baby cave troll and tried to adopt him. Boy, was Mom mad at us that time.





That's when
the big scary
monsters
tried to
eat me
up.

Get the
little piggy
there!

HELP!

Tasty, plump
dinner!

First to
gub him gets
the bigger
share!

I'll
be the
winner!

BIG SCARY MONSTERS!

Part Two of Father and Son

Bill Willingham: Michael Allred:
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Here's a confession—
back then I
always forgot
how to do basic
things when I
got scared.

Okay, not just
then. I still
do sometimes.

Get off
me!

HELP!

In any case, I couldn't
change into a wolf—
where I might stand at
least a slight chance of
fighting back.

You
flea-ridden
beast!

HELP!

And I couldn't fly worth a
tinker's damn to get away.

Our
piggy's
getting
free!

HELP!

In times of danger I've
always been pretty
useless.

We're
losing our
feast!

HELP!

My brother Darien, now, he was a fighter.

HOLD ON. DID ANY OF YOU HEAR SOMETHING?

WHO CAN HEAR ANYTHING OVER THE PIG?

SQUEEEEE!

Then again, all of my brothers and sisters seemed to have inherited more big bad wolfiness than me.

I'M SURE I HEARD--
--SOMETHING.

HEY!

SQUEEEEE!

THERE'S ONLY FIVE OF US HERE! WHERE'S AMBROSE?

I THINK HE WAS LAGGING BEHIND.

WILL YOU PLEASE SHUT UP, MR. PIG? I CAN'T HEAR MYSELF THINK!

SQUEEEEE!

FINE! THEN I'LL SHUT YOU UP!

**SQUEE--
=CKK!<**

NOW, MAYBE WE CAN HEAR WHATEVER IT IS I HEARD.

AMBROSE!





COME ON!
IF WE RETRACE OUR
STEPS WE MAY BE ABLE TO
FIND WHERE AMBROSE
SPLIT OFF FROM
US!

I THINK I
HEAR SOMETHING
UP AHEAD!



YOWIE!

WHOA!

ZOOKS!



Away with you!
Or I'll **REND** flesh and
CRUNCH bone!

GET HIM!

KEEP HIM
BUSY!

REMEMBER
WHAT DADDY TAUGHT
US!



This
is no place
for wolves!
This is where
MONSTERS
room!

WE CAN
SURVIVE THIS, IF
WE KEEP OUR NERVE
AND WORK AS A
PACK!

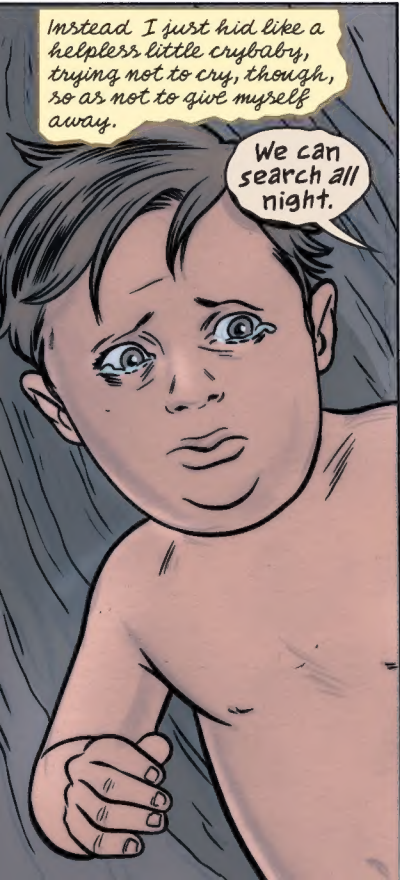
ATTACK
HIM EVERY TIME HE
FACES SOMEONE
ELSE!



I should have been able to fly to safety. I should have been able to wolf-out and run away.

Where are you, tasty bite?

Come out, come out to play.



Instead, I just hid like a helpless little crybaby, trying not to cry, though, so as not to give myself away.

We can search all night.



And then, all hope was lost. I was a goner for sure!

You'll never get away!

YIEEEEE!

Except that's when my father showed up to save the day!

RRRROOOAAAARRRRR!





What can I tell you about the great and terrible battle that occurred that day?



To say that it was big and savage and deadly would be to commit the most egregious of understatement's.



Let me instead say, if I may be forgiven some literary extravagance, that it was an epic struggle that spawned terrible legends and bred raw, wild mythologies.



Many recall the earthquake tremors shaking the castle, but few know what caused them.

WHOA! HOLD ON! THERE GOES ANOTHER ONE!



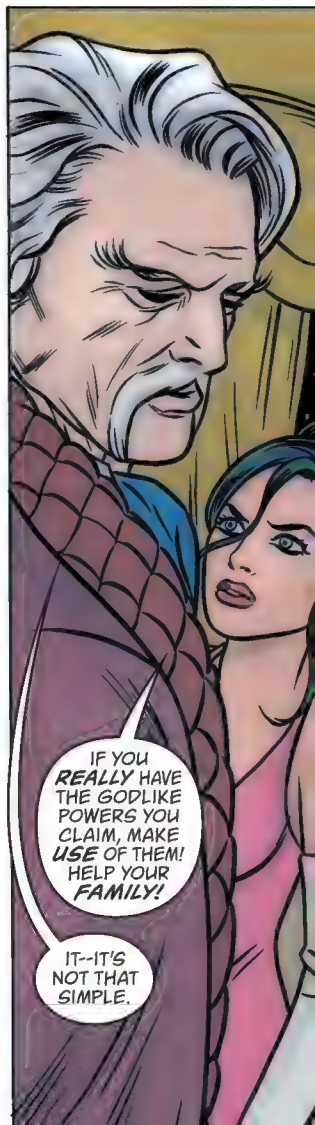
THAT WAS **BIGGER** THAN THE PREVIOUS TREMBLER, I THINK.

HERE, LET ME **HELP** YOU, SNOW.



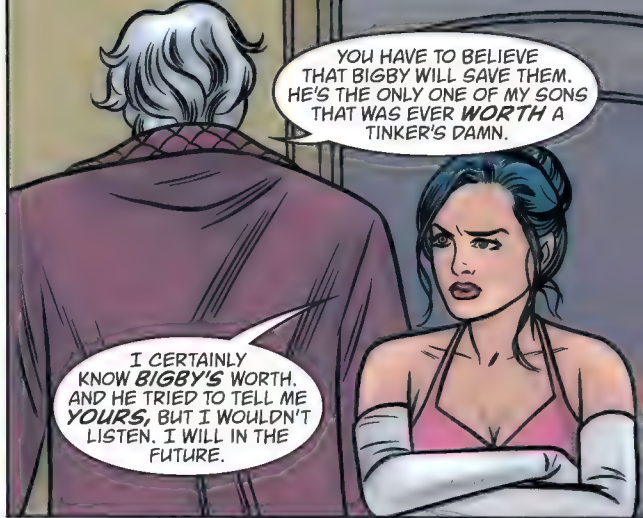
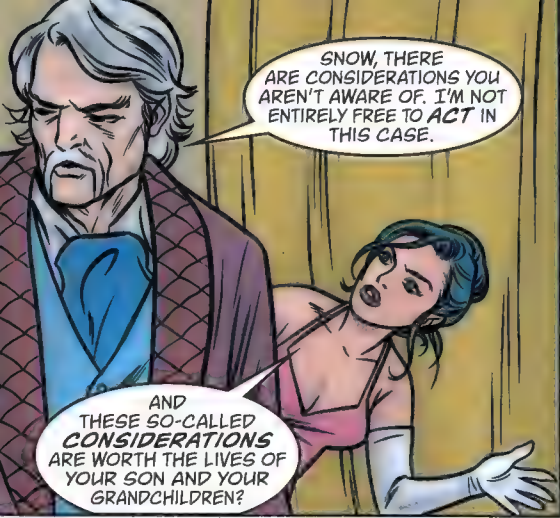
QUIT **CLUTCHING** AT ME, MR. NORTH! THE TREMOR HAS PASSED AND I'M **FINE!**

I DON'T NEED YOU UP **HERE** HELPING ME, I NEED YOU DOWN IN THE FOREST **BELOW**, HELPING MY HUSBAND AND CHILDREN!



IF YOU **REALLY** HAVE THE GODLIKE POWERS YOU CLAIM, MAKE **USE** OF THEM! HELP YOUR **FAMILY!**

IT--IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.





My father fought three dreadful monsters and the earth itself trembled in fright.




It was simultaneously the most amazing and alarming thing I'd ever seen.



But remember there were six beasts, not just three.

The Earth SHUDDERS with primal slaughter!



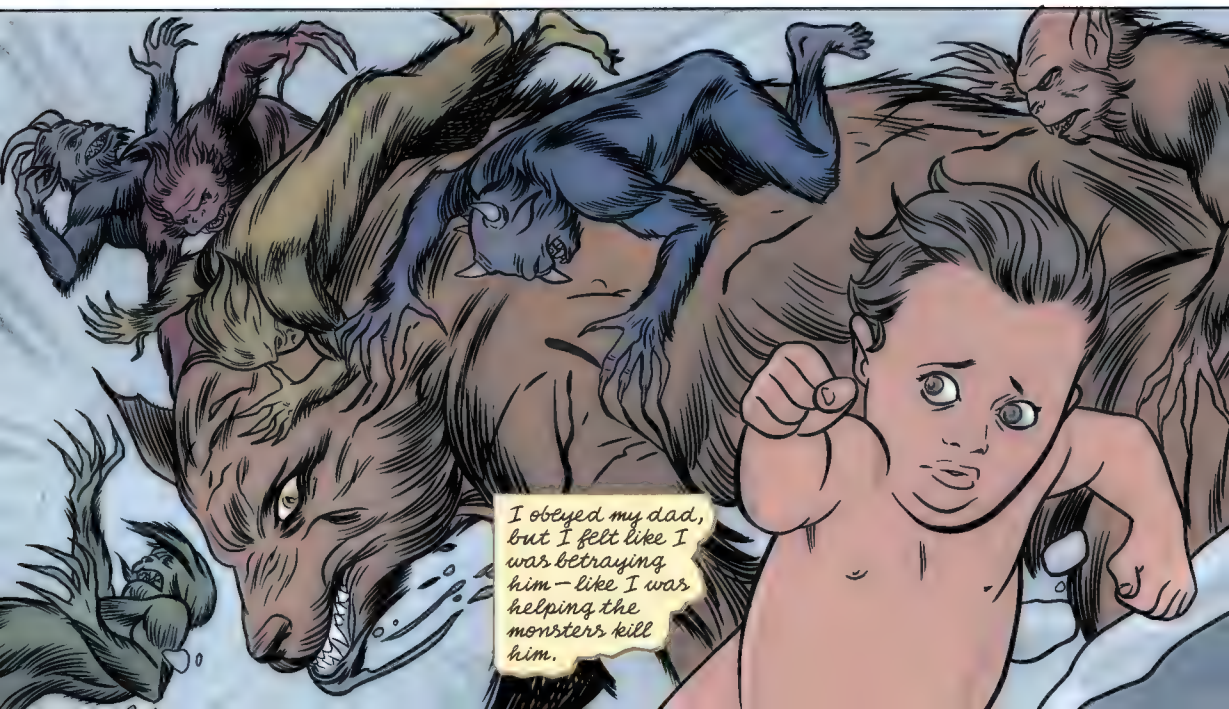
The others
came running!

Hurry,
Brother!

In very little time, all six
monsters had my dad
surrounded. Seeing what
just three of them did to
him, how could he possibly
survive twice that number?

RUN,
BOY! GET
OUT OF
HERE!

FIND THE
OTHERS AND ALL
OF YOU GET BACK TO
THE CASTLE!



I obeyed my dad,
but I felt like I
was betraying
him—like I was
helping the
monsters kill
him.

Eventually I found my brothers and sisters.

DAD'S FIGHTING GREAT BIG MONSTERS!

WE KNOW! WE ALMOST CAUGHT ONE OF THEM!

We couldn't fly back to the castle, because by then the world had begun to kick and heave worse than before.

So we huddled together while hurricane winds tried to batter us.

What more can I tell you about that endless, fateful night? Later we learned that great fissures were opened all over the lands.

Thirteen stars of ill omen fell out of the heavens, shattering mountains.



Seven different two-headed calves were born in seven surrounding farms.



And young men saw horrible visions.



AND A SERPENT WILL RISE OUT OF THE SEA--

While old men dreamed fell dreams.



--0000--
OAHHH--

And a maiden sang one thousand new unclean spirits into the world.



Sometime after dawn the winds died, the earth settled and the animal screams ended. We ventured out in search of our father.

THAT'S MY COAT.

And found him—mangled and bloodied.

DON'T BE FRIGHTENED, KIDS. STEP FORWARD. I'M **PLEN**TY HURT, BUT I WON'T DIE. AND I'LL GET BETTER QUICKLY. I PROMISE.

...OOOOO-OHHHHH...

AND THESE WRETCHED THINGS WON'T TRY TO **HURT** YOU ANYMORE EITHER.

IT TOOK SOME DOING, BUT I'VE TAMED THEM TO MY WILL.

THEY'RE **WOLVES!**

AMONG **OTHER** THINGS IN THEIR REPERTOIRE. THEY'RE ALSO **FAMILY.**

SAY HELLO TO YOUR UNCLES. MY ELDER BROTHERS.

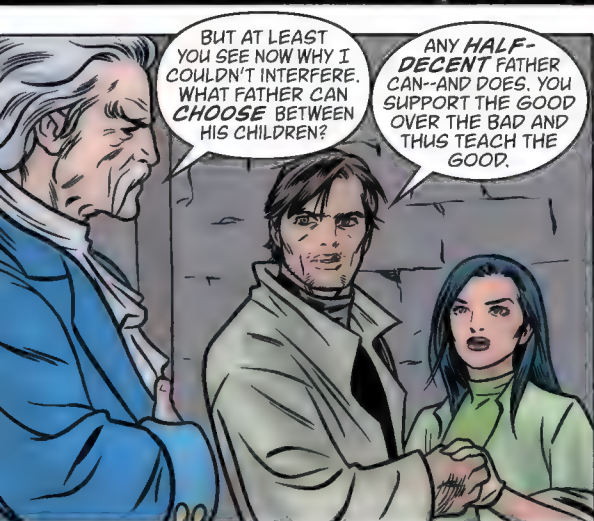


We spent most of the next few days in bed.

THEY'VE BEEN LIVING IN THE WOODS BELOW MY CASTLE FOR YEARS, HOPING TO WORM THEIR WAY BACK INTO MY GOOD GRACES--AS IF THEY EVER HAD MY GRACE TO BEGIN WITH--

--TRYING ON NEW MONSTROUS SHAPES EVERY DECADE OR SO, IN AN ATTEMPT TO FIND ONE THAT WOULD IMPRESS ME.

IDIOTS. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TAUGHT THEM TO SHAPE-SHIFT.



BUT AT LEAST YOU SEE NOW WHY I COULDN'T INTERFERE. WHAT FATHER CAN CHOOSE BETWEEN HIS CHILDREN?

ANY HALF-DECENT FATHER CAN--AND DOES. YOU SUPPORT THE GOOD OVER THE BAD AND THUS TEACH THE GOOD.



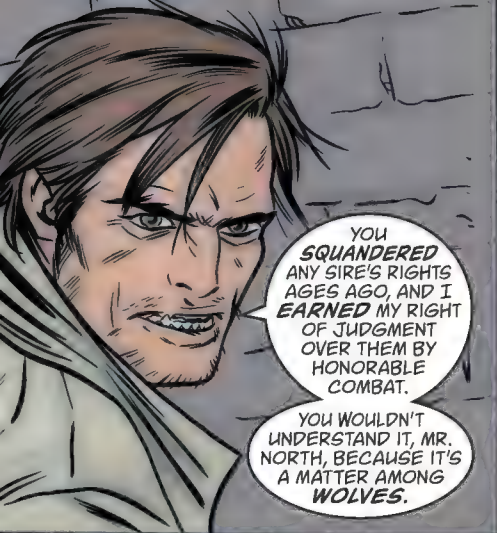
HOW CAN YOU BE SO BEREFT OF COMMON VIRTUE NOT TO KNOW THAT MUCH?

AND HOW COULD WEE BIGBY GROW UP TO BE SUCH A MIGHTY BEAST?



SHUT UP, YOU. I'LL DEAL WITH YOU LOT LATER.

IT'S NOT YOUR PLACE TO DO SO, SON. IT'S MINE, BY RIGHT OF FATHERHOOD.



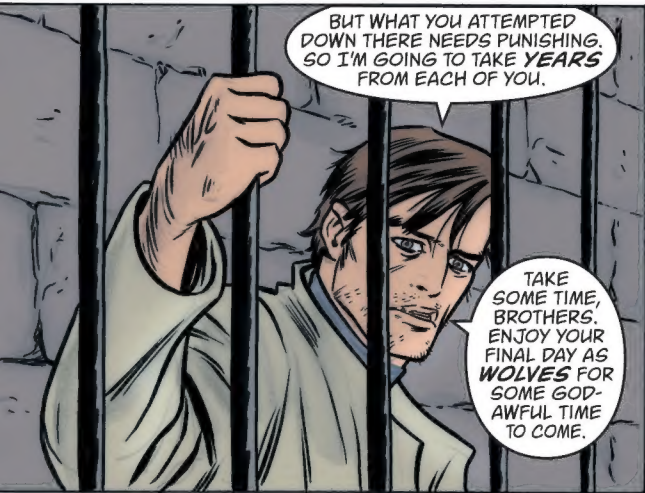




WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU WHIMPERING DOGS?

WE'RE YOUR ELDER BROTHERS, BIGBY. YOU SHOULD SHOW US MERCY FOR THAT ALONE.

I'VE ALREADY DONE THAT. I LET YOU LIVE.



BUT WHAT YOU ATTEMPTED DOWN THERE NEEDS PUNISHING. SO I'M GOING TO TAKE YEARS FROM EACH OF YOU.

TAKE SOME TIME, BROTHERS. ENJOY YOUR FINAL DAY AS WOLVES FOR SOME GOD-AWFUL TIME TO COME.



AND THEN STEEL YOURSELVES FOR A VERY LONG STAY IN A VERY SMALL PRISON.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY'RE COMING HOME WITH US? IN CASE YOU FORGOT, WE'RE SHARING ONE SMALL CARPET BETWEEN US.

THERE'S NO ROOM TO ADD SIX WOLVES, EVEN IF I AGREED TO ALLOW IT.

DON'T WORRY, DARLING. THEY'LL FIT. I PROMISE.

All things considered, it was quite an eventful trip.



HOLD THE JAR UPRIGHT, SNOW. DON'T SPILL MY BROTHERS.

WOLF MANOR.

THERE'S ONE FOR EACH OF US, DADDY?



THAT'S RIGHT. GRANDPA NORTH INSISTED YOU EACH HAVE SOMETHING TO TAKE BACK WITH YOU FROM HIS CASTLE.

CAN WE NAME THEM ANYTHING WE WANT?

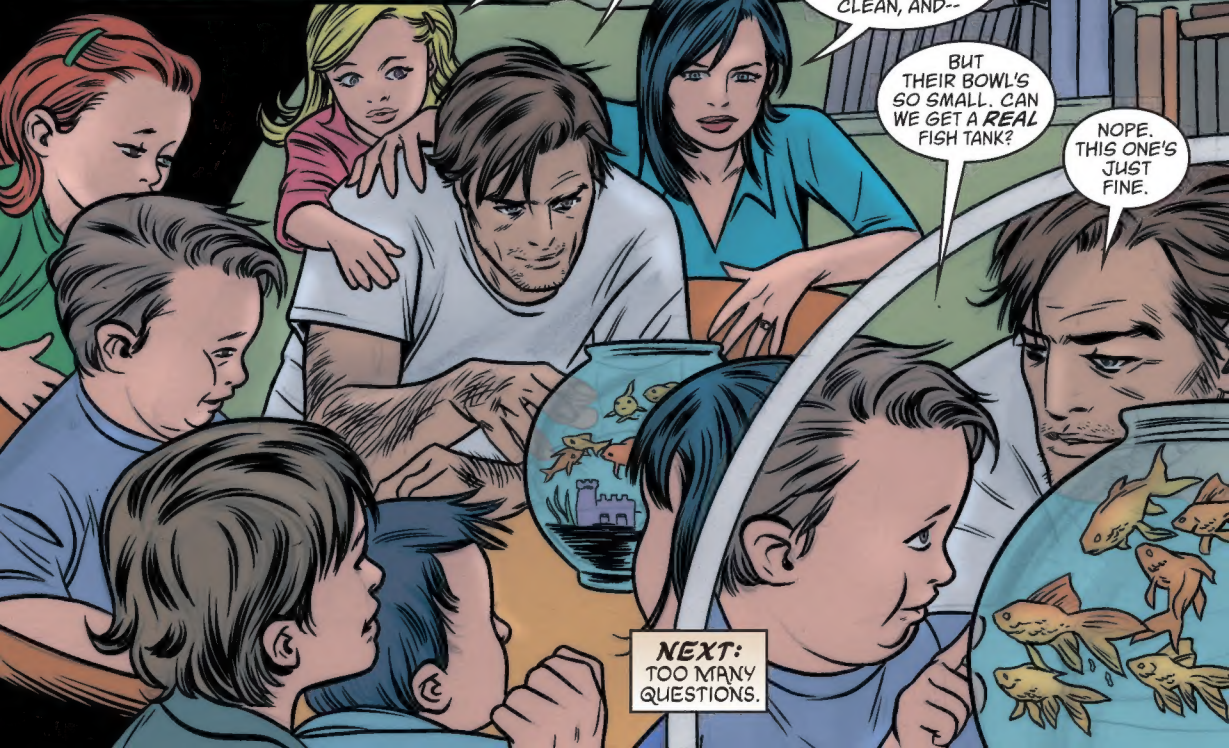
But it was good to come home. My parents' house was always a safe haven, in a life that proved to be full of dangers.

Ambrose Wolf

YES, MY DARLING THERESE. AND FEED THEM AND KEEP THEIR BOWL CLEAN, AND--

BUT THEIR BOWL'S SO SMALL. CAN WE GET A REAL FISH TANK?

NOPE. THIS ONE'S JUST FINE.



NEXT: TOO MANY QUESTIONS.

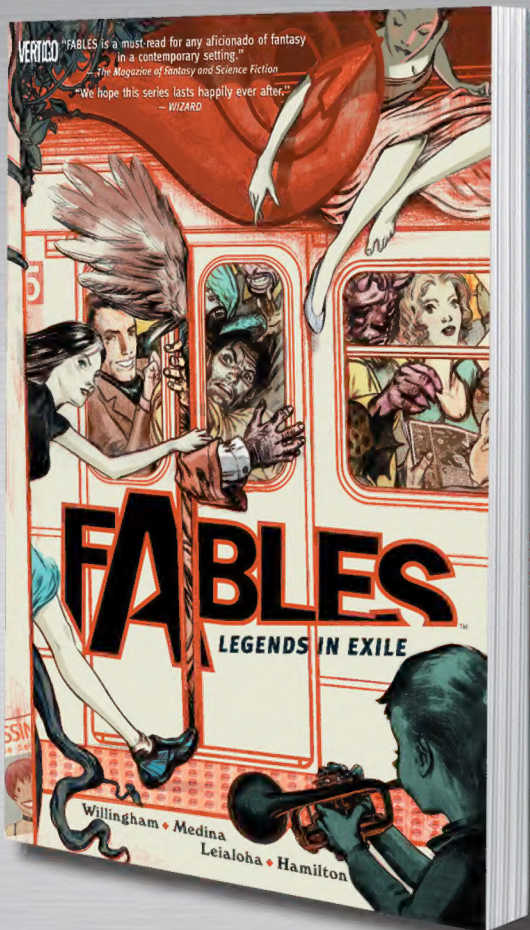
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BILL WILLINGHAM

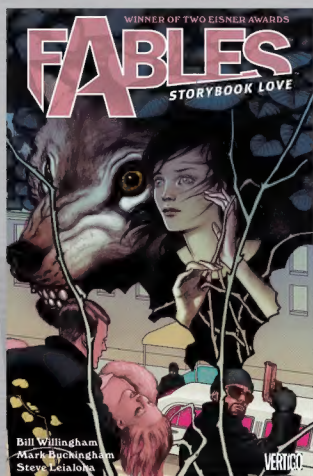
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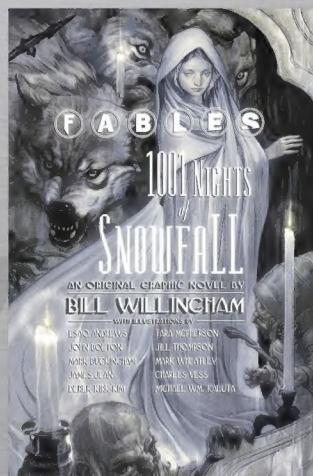
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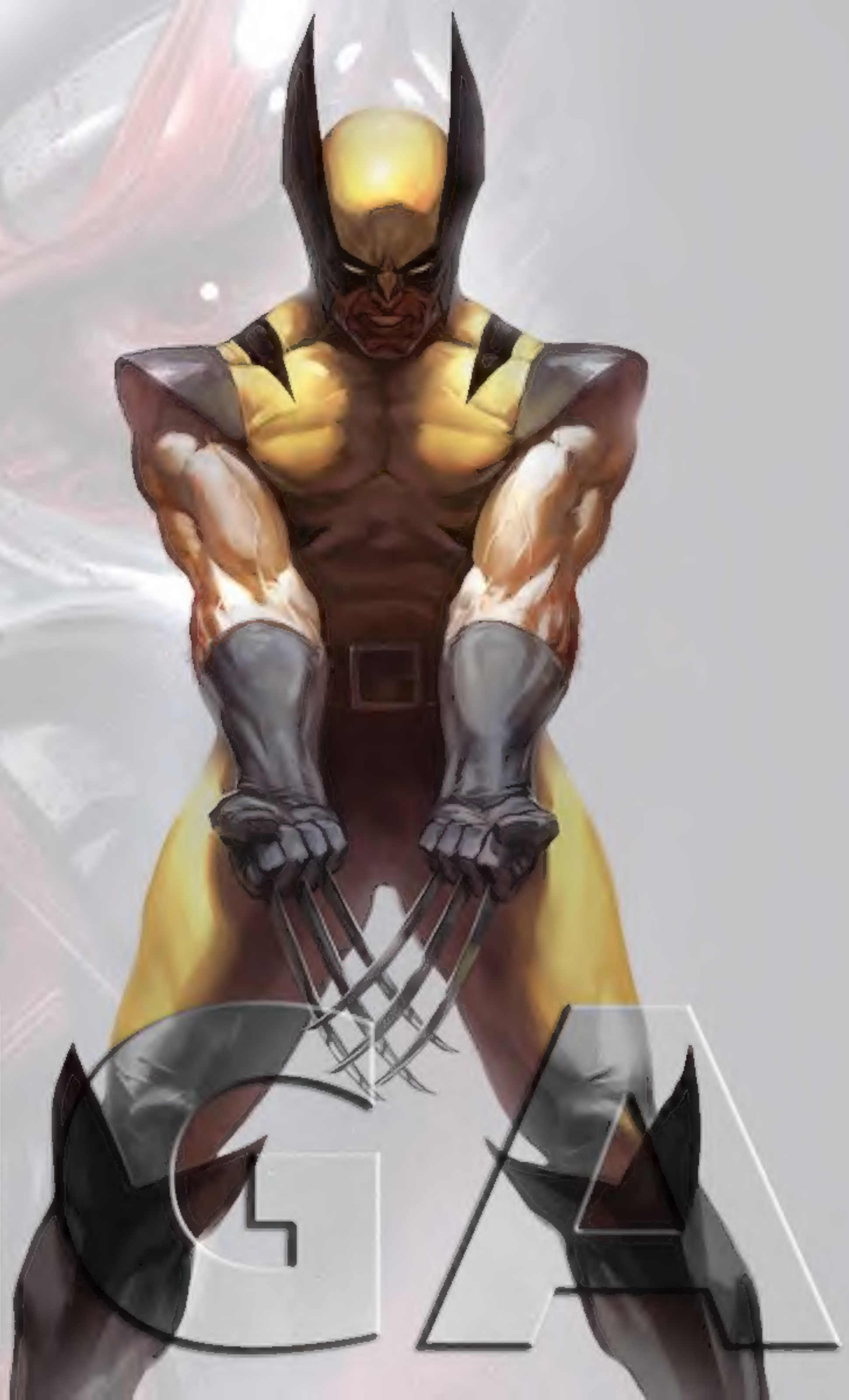


FABLES:
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



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NATHAN